

## 1/18/2006 Moran Visits U.S. Troops

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Travels to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq to Visit Kansas Soldiers Serving in the War on Terror

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran returned on Monday, January 16, from a week-long visit to the Middle East where he met with U.S. troops serving in the War on Terror. Moran traveled with six other Members of Congress to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq to visit Kansas soldiers, meet government officials and view progress made where U.S. troops are currently deployed.

"The opportunity to convey Kansans' gratitude and appreciation to troops for their service to our country was the most meaningful part of my trip," Moran said. "I was also interested to return to the Middle East in light of ongoing discussions in Congress and among the American people about the role of the United States in Iraq and the War on Terror."

Approximately 150,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Iraq, including more than 800 members of the Kansas National Guard. Approximately 19,000 U.S. troops are also serving in Afghanistan.

"The message from the Kansas National Guard soldiers I met with was clear. They believe in what they are doing and that they are doing their job well," Moran said. "Many soldiers told me they believe progress is being made in forming the government, establishing security, building schools and improving the everyday lives of the Iraqi people."

In addition to meeting with Kansas soldiers, Moran met with Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan; Abdul Maloud, Iraqi Minister of Agriculture; General George Casey, Commander of Multinational Forces in Iraq; Ryan Crocker, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan; and hundreds of servicemen and women.

Moran's trip follows the historic December election of new government leaders. Moran said he wants to be certain a plan is in place for the people and military of Iraq to take over a significant portion of the role the U.S. military is now playing.

"This war cannot be won by us alone," Moran said. "It is important that we continue pursuing a policy to transfer the responsibility for Iraqi security to Iraqi forces so they can defend their own country. This year we will gain a clearer understanding of whether this can be done and whether Iraq's newly-elected government can successfully function. Political and military leaders believe there has been enough progress that success is achievable."

"It was an honor to meet with many officials during the trip and visit with our military men and women," Moran said. "Though they are in a difficult situation, they are working hard, and morale is still high. While not a day goes by that soldiers do not miss their homes and families, they take satisfaction in the work they are doing and appreciate our support. They are proud of their efforts to empower the people of Iraq as they help secure the freedoms that we enjoy every day as Americans."

Moran returned home with messages from Kansas soldiers that he plans to pass along to family members in the coming days.

Moran was invited to participate in the trip by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. He was joined by Representatives Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), Frank Lucas (R-OK), Stephanie Herseth (D-SD), David Scott (D-GA) and Jean Schmidt (R-OH). This was his second trip to Iraq and Afghanistan. He visited Iraq in August 2003 and Afghanistan in

August 2002.

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